

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1821.

NO. 47.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

DIALOGUE.

Continued from page 176.

Universalist. It is presumable you have other scriptures, than the one just mentioned, to offer in support of this doctrine, which lays at the root of your system. This being so interwoven with the whole frame of modern theology, if it fail of necessary aid, the edifice must fall. Please to recite those texts upon which you have pledged its establishment.

Limitarian. Other scriptures! certainly. Take the following, Gen. iii. 12, 13; "And the man said, the woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman what is this that thou hast done? and the woman said, the serpent beguiled me and I did eat." Take also ii. Cor. xi. 3. "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent tempted Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." See also Rom. iii. 23. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. v. 12. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, so death hath passed upon all, for that all have sinned." Besides which, the succeeding verses of that chapter, are full of corroborating testimony, though they may not contain any assertion more positive than those which have been repeated. These, I believe are about all upon which the compilers of this form of sound words have formed the doctrine of the fall of man: and it appears to me allsufficient, incontrovertible, and unanswerable.

Universalist. Such were once my own conclusions. But, that you may have the full benefit of all, that is made to bear in favour of orthodoxical hypothesis; let me remind you of a few other texts, which, if those you have quoted be appropriate to your purpose, these cannot be deserving of less consi-

deration. See i. Cor. xv. 21, 22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive." And also the 49th verse, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Having requested your proof from scripture; and assisted you in preparing weapons to be used against myself; you will now patiently and with equal candour, indulge me in comparing scripture with scripture, and in making such remarks as may fairly be predicated upon the platform by which we agreed to regulate our controversy.

Let us first examine what is asserted in your system of divinity, to be the cause of our parents, and their posterity's mortality, or subjection to death. Having, as you yourself acknowledge, believed that every doctrine contained in your Confession of Faith, was supported by the bible, principally, because of their wight of character, who compiled it; I was greatly astonished when I began an investigation for myself, to find that this important point rested upon a single text of scripture,—nay, upon only a negative implication from the single text found in Gen. ii. 17; "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This fact, cannot I think fail to excite your surprise; and if you be ingenuous, it must originate some doubts of the fallibility of the compilers you have so reverently named.

With the zeal of these gentlemen before us, and that of their advocates who uphold their system, can we help believing, that if any direct quotation could be brought to establish this opinion of human mortality, they would have triumphantly offered it, and never suffered a promulgation upon such superlatively slender premises? Nay, ought we not to grieve, at witnessing men virtually declare themselves so determined to support their educational prepos-

sions, as to insult the world with their *ipse dixit* as a ground of faith, whenever the divine testimony, reason or common sense refuse their sovereign sanction? Should not this one instance, occurring on the very threshold of our argument, tend to remove that strange, that superstitious, but natural *something* which is felt by the conscientiously inquisitive mind, when it only begins remotely to query, whether all and singular of the clerical dogmas be radically true and worthy of our unshaken faith? For my part, I rejoice that this chain, composed alike of the links of ignorance, prejudice, and the fear of ecclesiastical and sectarian censure, is so far dissevered, that through divine grace and goodness, I hope it shall never be able to bring me again into bondage.

Lim. You speak truly, when you say that our Confession of Faith quotes no other text, to sustain this particular item of doctrine. But this does not prove the want of other testimony: listen to the following, which, though used primarily to sustain the doctrine of original sin, yet are extremely relevant to the case in debate. They are found in the epistle to the Romans; "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin;" and again, "the wages of sin is death." But suppose corroboratory testimony were wholly wanting, is not one assertion of scripture, as much inspiration, as a multiplicity would be? I agree that this solitary text, as you term it, proves the doctrine only by implication, but at the same time so fairly, that you speak most unwarrantably in denominating them, (the premises which the Confession of Faith cites to rest the doctrine upon) "superlatively slender." Let me repeat the text; "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"! What can be plainer, then, than by forbearing to eat, they would not "surely die." And if they would not have died, it were a question, calculated to excite the indignation or ridicule of a child, to ask him what would have been the

sole alternative, viz; life, exempted from even the most distant prospect of death, even IMMORTAL LIFE. Hence I maintain in common with the christian world, and as Dr. Gill, that prince of biblical expositors, in substance has it in his comments upon this text, 'Man, who but for this first act of sin, would have lived an immortal life, became a mortal creature.'

Uni. My friend will please to observe, that I dispute not the righteous fact and true assertion, of death being sin's wages, or that sin came into the world through the medium and agency of man. The questions at issue now, are, whether Adam's disobedience produced our mortality; and what is the scriptural nature of that death denominated the wages of sin." The first is impossible to be true, because immortality cannot die. It was as untangible to the iron grasp of death, as are pure spirits to the grasp and polluted touch of mortals. Now if the immortality of saints and angels; nay, (if the proposition be not too irreverential,) of the Deity himself, consist in something else, besides its own eternal nature, wherein is the propriety of the universal acceptance of the term, or what is still more momentous, wherein consists the safety of man in his immortal life, in a future world? The interrogation, Can immortality die? brings with it the only answer of which it is susceptible, viz; the refutation of the belief that Adam's sin produced his or our liability to temporal death. To render this obvious fact still more obvious, let me ask, which of the advocates of orthodoxy, in the exercise of common sense, will assert that abstract darkness can be changed into, or can destroy abstract light;—abstract cold (admitting it to be a positive principle) change or destroy abstract heat;—abstract weakness, transmute or destroy abstract strength; or any supposed or real principles of the most opposite nature, reverse and destroy that upon which they can have no effect. It is admitted that darkness supplies the vacuum occasioned by the absence of light—cold of heat—weakness of strength; but their absence does not demonstrate the annihilation of any essential property of their nature; and in our argument, we are not contending for the locality or contingencies of immortality, but for its properties, viz; that which constitutes it IMMORTALITY!

Let us now consider what was the nature of the "death" spoken of; and here it would appear, that if Moses gave us the truth, it could not have been a temporal death, because if so, what the scripture asserts, came not to pass; for Adam lived many hundred years after his disobedience—he did not die on the "day" thereof. That it was not eternal death, or eternal torments, (for this is the legitimate definition of the expression,) is abundantly evident from the fact that no such thing is any where mentioned, but especially not mentioned in Genesis, where the creation is spoken of: the most likely and proper place for its insertion. I have more to say on this point, as we proceed on our discussion, all of which I waive for the present, by asking, Why was the penalty of this undefined death annexed to the law given to Adam? You answer, In order to deter him from sin. Then I ask, If this were really meant, by means of exhibiting the awful consequences, how is it that he was not informed of eternal torments? Did the creator design to entrap him, by something worse than an *ex post facto* law, or was Moses an unfaithful, and consequently not an inspired historian? These are momentous questions, but they cannot be irreverent, if propounded with solemnity, and in the fear of him who judges according to the motive.

Another reason why this death could not have been eternal, is, that those upon whom it was pronounced, never suffered its infliction; and allowing the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to be true, they were at least equally guilty with any of their posterity.—But orthodoxy admits them to the courts of paradise upon the ground of Christ's sufferings. And still the same result follows, that is, the law never received its penalty, no, not even in their substitutes' enduring its woeful penalty;—for if they are saved, they are clear and exempt from the penalty, and none will assert, not even the most enthusiastic satisfactionist, that the divine Saviour could have suffered eternal torments, while enduring the pangs of crucifixion for a few *hours*,—or, what is yet more absurd and abominable, that he does now, and must for ever endure them. Therefore the doctrine is an imposition upon the human mind, and the very reverse of any thing that can possibly

emanate from that fountain of goodness—even the Almighty creator, Preserver and Benefactor of men, "Who will have all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

To be continued.

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, June 23, 1821.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.
THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.
(Review of No. 5, Continued.)

The expression which occurs in our Saviour's prayer recorded by St. John, "I pray not for the world" and which Dr. W. has here introduced to prove that Christ's advocacy does not extend to the whole world, we have already and we trust satisfactorily shewn can be brought forward in the support of no such unscriptural doctrine. We wish at this time, merely to request our opponent, to turn to his Greek testament and he will find that the real import of the expression translated "I pray not for the world" is, that Christ was not then, or at that particular time, praying for the world of unbelievers, and not, that he never did nor ever will pray for them.* On the contrary, we are assured by the voice of inspiration, that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 1, 2. to exclude any one from which advocacy, will require our opponents to prove that there are some men who are not members of the human family.

Dr. W. now comes to the consideration of the text quoted; "He is the propitiation for *our sins*, and *not for ours only*, but *also for the sins of the whole world*;" which declaration the Dr. admits points out Christ to be the propitiation for the sins of the Jews, and also for those of the gentiles—an expla-

* Was it not for part of those included in "the world" that Christ did not *then* pray for, that he offered up the solemn supplication when extended on the cross; "Father forgive them, they know not what they do"? It was certainly not for believers, but for the most opposed of unbelievers.

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nation to which we have no very strong objection, for the phraseology of Dr. W., though not, according to our opinion exactly correct, gives the meaning of the text an extension as far as the scriptures—as far as our doctrine, founded on those scriptures, require. Who then, we next ask, do the Jews and Gentiles comprise? The former it is well known embrace the whole house of Israel. Who constitute the latter? Are they some particular nation of believers? Are they the individuals of some *particular* religion? Are they a number elected from among mankind? To all of these questions, the student of the word of God—the scholar, must reply with a pointed negative! On the contrary, the gentiles, called by the Hebrews *Goem*, *Goyim*, include *all those* who are not Jews,—all those who do not believe on, and worship “the only true and living God”—literally, the Heathen—the unbeliever; and it is in this sense the term is made use of in the New Testament.—The nations who know not God—the gentiles.

Now, Dr. W. has admitted that the simple term *world*, in Rom. xi. 12. signifies the *gentiles*, consequently the “whole world,” in our text, must signify “all the gentiles.” If then Christ was the propitiation for the sins of the Jews, and the apostle declares “all Israel shall be saved;” and not the propitiation for their sins only, but for the sins also of the “whole” gentile “world,”—all who were not Jews—and if God, as Dr. W. also admits, is “the saviour of all sorts of men,” how can he deny the doctrine of Universal grace? Where will he find any for whom Christ has not died, of whom God is not the Saviour?

That “all Israel” shall be saved, the scriptures without doubt declare, as all will be convinced by reading only the Epistle to the Romans, particularly the eleventh chapter,* which equally clearly declares likewise the salvation of “the fullness of the gentiles.” It is also written, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.”† “Look unto me, and be saved all the ends of the earth: For I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself,

the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear*, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength—to him shall come, and *all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*”* “God hath highly exalted him, (Christ) and given him a name above every other name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God the father.”† “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one, all things, in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, in him.”‡ “For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. All things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist,—who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the father that in him should all fulness dwell,—that having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, whether things in heaven or things on earth.”§ “The father loveth the son, and hath given all things into his hands.”¶ “All that the father giveth me shall come to me,—and him that cometh to me will I in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the father’s will who hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up *at the last day.*”*** “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” heard John, in prophetic vision of the consummation of all things, “saying, Blessing, and honour and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever.”††

Testimonies which, if they do not mean the salvation of all men, whether

* Isai. xlv. 22—24.

† Phil. ii. 9—11; No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of the father, but by the holy spirit. See 1 Cor. xxii. 3.

‡ Ephes. i. 10.

§ Col. i. 15—20.

¶ St. John iii. 35.

*** St. John vi. 37—39.

†† Rev. v. 13.

those who sleep with their fathers—those who now occupy the scene of action, or those who are hereafter to be born—whether Jews or gentiles—elect or non elect—believer or non believer—mean nothing.

While we have these testimonies in our favour, verified by the oath of the Almighty, let us remain firm in the doctrine which they set forth, and though reviled from one end of the earth to the other, in the annual addresses of the Pharisees of the day, let us recollect that HE whose lips first confirmed their truth to mankind met with persecution also, in consequence, even unto death.

Article 3.—“*On bringing bibles to Church.*” With the leading sentiments contained in this article, we acknowledge ourselves to be much pleased.—The writer has, we conceive, pointed out to his readers the fruitful cause of too many of those corruptions which have crept into the doctrines of the christian church; and, at the same time, has hinted at a plan which, if properly carried into effect, would in a great degree, and before long, eradicate them all.

“Protestant Christians generally profess to esteem it one of the greatest blessings of the reformation, that they are permitted the use of the holy scriptures, and allowed to try the doctrines of their teachers by that infallible rule. But were we to judge of their sentiments by the manner in which they employ this privilege, we should be apt to conclude that they do not really value it so highly as they pretend. For, from the manner in which they proceed in regard to the use of the Bible, we should infer that they either *now repose implicit confidence in the fidelity of their public instructors*, or that they do not consider it a matter worthy of their attention to know whether the texts from which their preachers address them be in the sacred volume or not. They imagine, or at least appear to imagine, that the large Bible from which the clergyman reads his text, is the only Bible that is required in the house of God. Hence, we believe, that clergymen might, in many instances, read their texts from the apocrypha, talmud, or alcoran—did they only seem to read them from a *large book*, marked on the back, *Holy Bible*—without being detected by many of their hearers. But this could not be done without detection, did all, who are able to read, bring Bibles to church, and examine the text when the preacher announces it to the congregation.”

The bible is confessed by every christian to be the foundation of all the certain knowledge we are in possession of, with respect to “the great first cause,” his nature, his attributes, and

* See also Isai. xlv. 25.

† Psal. xxii. 27.

his law ;—to it must we also refer for all the information we are here capable of acquiring, concerning a resurrection from that death and consequent destruction, to which experience teaches us, all flesh is liable ;—the knowledge of that life we are to enjoy beyond the grave, and of the means by which we are to attain to it ; To it must we also go as to “the wisdom of the physician of souls,” to find a remedy for our unhappiness in this present world—a balm for every wound of sin. It is the only foundation of pure and undefiled religion—the only code of genuine morality. To have, therefore, a perfect knowledge, and a correct understanding of all its contents, must be a subject of the very first importance to every “son and daughter of Adamic nature.” It is the “pearl of great price,” to purchase which all that we possess should be sold. A true acquaintance with “the word of God,” is only to be acquired by a careful and accurate study of the Word itself, by a mind unpossessed of prejudice or bigotry. That the bible is not thus closely studied, even in communities calling themselves christian—and even by those who have made a more direct and solemn profession of their being the disciples of HIM of whose religion it is the revelation, is a lamentable fact.

“A great many of those who attend upon public worship in our churches, have not time, on account of their other pressing avocations, to study the sacred volume closely. If they read it at all, they read it over in haste, and carelessly ; and often do not, in consequence, understand very well what they read.”

By others, the due connection of the whole testimony is but seldom attended to, but, their inferences and conclusions are drawn from detached texts and even parts of texts, without apparently the remotest idea that the Bible is one perfect whole, all the parts of which harmonize one with the other, without contradiction or collision.—Their ideas of the meaning of many of the terms made use of by the inspired penmen, are derived from the artificial definitions of theological creeds and catechisms, where they are made to bend to human systems, instead of being derived from a close attention to the context with which they are found in connexion ; too much attention is also paid, and even by those from whom we should expect better things, to the pre-

sent artificial and very injudicious division of the scriptures into chapters and verses, by which, in many instances, the connexion of subjects is destroyed—the relative separated from its antecedent ; and even the parts of the same sentence divided into different verses, if not into different chapters. These circumstances give those who are desirous of misleading, a powerful influence over the understandings of the majority of their hearers, by which they are enabled to instil into their minds, instead of the salutary doctrines of the gospel of Christ, the vain traditions of men, which, being communicated from parents to children, and growing with their growth, and strengthening with their strength, take such deep root, as at length almost to baffle the united efforts of the “wise and good,” to eradicate them, and substitute in their place, the plain but glorious doctrines of “evangelical truth.”

The consequences resulting from this ignorance of the real doctrines of the Bible, is truly alarming.—To it may be attributed the apostacy of many—and the lukewarmness of others.

How are these evils to be remedied ? By encouraging, we reply, by every means within our power, the study of the word of God ; and inducing those over whom we have any influence, to test by it every thing offered for their belief, as doctrines of religion, whether sanctioned by individuals, or upheld by the more imposing authority of synods, of councils, or of assemblies ;—in a word, “to search the scriptures to see whether these things be so or not.”—And, on the part of those who are placed as ministers of “the new covenant,” to endeavour to explain to their hearers, in their public and private ministry, the doctrine of their Lord and master, in such a manner as shall be comprehended by each of their various capacities, and, in so doing, to preserve the testimony itself pure, without diminution or interpolation ;—to explain the terms made use of in it, according to their most common acceptation and the import of the original expressions, the meaning of which they are intended to convey ;—for their proofs of doctrine, to refer to the divine record, and never to the creeds, the dogmas, the Confessions of Faith, manufactured by human hands. To be cautious that all

their quotations advanced as proofs of what they assert, actually relate to the subject they are brought forward to support, and not to one most foreign from it. Never to require their hearers’ assent to a doctrine that cannot be expressed in the very words of the scriptures themselves ; to hold up their father “who art in heaven,” to all to whom they may be called to minister, as their best of friends ; and in every instance to endeavour to enforce upon their minds, a conviction that the Bible points out to them, in the clearest manner, the only certain plan of acquiring real happiness here, and an eternity of bliss hereafter,—a plan emanating from the love, devised by the wisdom, and carried into effect by the infinite power of their heavenly father. When this is done, but never until then, as long as time exists, will error be entirely dissipated and truth universally received.

TO BE CONTINUED.

From the Universalist Magazine.

PRAISE.

MAY all our pow’rs of mind,
To God, our Father kind,
An anthem raise ;
Whose cloud of glory bright,
With beams of heav’nly light,
Dispels the gloom of night ;
O sing his praise:

The God of truth and grace
Unveils his rad’ent face,
And breaks the pow’r,
Of superstition’s chain ;
His grace shall ever reign,
And righteousness maintain,
While we adore.

As the blest morning ray
Drives darkness far away,
Behold his love
Our night of sin illumines,
Our hatred all consumes,
Each heart with grace perfumes,
In courts above.

All creatures shall combine,
To sing this grace divine,
And sound his fame,
Who saves the world from sin,
And righteousness brings in :
O let us now begin
To praise his name !

B.

PRINTING

Neatly executed at this office.